

**REVISED
MINUTES OF THE
TASK FORCE ON LEARNING STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY
IN PUBLIC EDUCATION**

August 2, 1999 - 9:00 a.m. - Room 405 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Howard A Stephenson, Chair
Rep. Tammy J. Rowan, Chair
Sen. Karen Hale
Rep. Karen W. Morgan
Rep. LaWanna "Lou" Shurtliff
Jill Kennedy
Kim Burningham
Linda B. Ogden
Ila Rose Fife

Staff Present:

Mr. Bryant R. Howe,
Research Analyst
Mr. James Wilson, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Heather Hobbs, Research Assistant
Ms. Wendy Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

Members Excused:

Sen. L. Steven Poulton
Rep. Jeff Alexander
Rep. Kevin S. Garn
Lt. Gov. Olene S. Walker

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials distributed in the meeting are on file in the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel.

1. Task Force Business -- Due to the lack of a quorum, no action was taken to approve the minutes of the June 21 and July 12, 1999 meetings.

2. Discussion of Utah Conference on Learning Standards and Accountability in Public Education - Rep. Rowan noted the need to involve the public in a meaningful way before decisions are made by the Task Force. She explained that approval from House leadership and funding had been obtained to hold a two-day conference. She introduced two citizen volunteers, Dr. Ed Fila and Michael Phillips who have been helping to plan the conference. Many invitations have been extended to interested public and core interest groups.

Dr. Fila reviewed the proposed agenda for the conference and the speakers who have been and are being invited. Rep. Rowan noted those things they would like to gain from the conference, including what should and should not be included in task force legislation; and that the conference mailing list will be used to gain feedback from the public.

Some members of the task force expressed concern that they were not consulted regarding the need for a conference. Concern was also expressed for the \$15,000 cost of the conference, which will be deducted from next year's task force staff support funding.

Rep. Rowan responded that the intention for the task force was to have the second year be a follow-up year and there will be adequate funding. She stressed the need for the public to feel involved in any legislation that is created by the task force.

3. Review of Core Curriculum -- Bonnie Morgan, Director, Curriculum and Instruction, Utah State Office of Education; Barbara Lawrence, Coordinator, Testing and Assessment, Utah State Office of Education reviewed how the core curriculum standards have been set and what they include.

Dr. Morgan reviewed the revision process that the core curriculum must go through to stay up-to-date. She also stated who is involved in that process. She stated that a core curriculum has 20-40 revisions before it reaches the adoption stage. Once the core is adopted, the teachers must be trained to know how to teach it at the pre-service institutions. The districts use the core curriculum when they consider new textbooks, in their instructional support materials, and in their assessments of the teachers.

Dr. Lawrence reviewed how the curriculum, the supporting instruction, and assessments are connected. She demonstrated an instructional activity that fulfills the core curriculum requirements. She reviewed the Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) development process that is needed to create a reliable and valuable test. She explained that pilot tests are given and then analyzed and given final revisions done before the process is complete. The test, she said, must yield a reliable score. She explained the importance for the teachers to know how to utilize the CRT results. She noted that the curriculum is assessed by an independent review that gives them input and makes sure the tests validate what is supposed to be taught. The next step is to set a level of standard for each test that is given that each student should meet.

Dr. Morgan reviewed the Language Arts comparison between Utah with Texas. She stated that Utah has excellent standards and assessment instruments already in place. The main issue lacking in Utah is accountability. She stated that the State Office of Education does not have a budget for curriculum development. She compared Utah's expenditures with Texas, but noted Texas contracts out most of the work to the University of Texas. She explained that Texas has, over 15 years, developed a system that will track students wherever they are in the state. She expressed the need for a budget increase to support the curriculum and assessment development.

Dr. Lawrence recommended that the State Office of Education be allowed to set the expected scores for the CRT tests. She noted that the Legislature could then set the performance standard, which can be a moving standard as it is in Texas or a high standard set with hopes that the schools can eventually reach it.

Dr. Morgan noted that they do not know how many teachers are teaching the core curriculum; however, those with a staff development program do better on the CRT's. One concern is getting teachers to consult the individual test results when forming their instruction. She emphasized the need to fund the increase of quality teachers in the classroom by giving them the knowledge they need to teach the core curriculum, utilizing the test results.

4. Adaptation of the Core Curriculum in the Ogden City School District -- Mark Visser, Assistant Principal, Highland Middle School, Ogden School District; explained the development of Ogden's strategic plan. He explained that a curriculum committee was formed to set standards and accountability procedures. Their intent was to assess students at the beginning of the school year and then deliver the needed services during the year. Another objective was to give students the knowledge they will use during their entire lives. He distributed the program and stated their intent to publish all "anchor skills" on the Internet so parents know what their students need to be achieving. The physical evidence on each student will be maintained. He explained the system whereby a student continues to work with a teacher until the student achieves the anchor skill. He demonstrated a Performance Task Planner and the pilot program they have instituted to help children learn to read.

5. School and District Level 1997 - 1998 Criterion Reference Test (CRT) Scores and Results of Survey of District Testing Directors -- Bryant R. Howe, Research Analyst and Heather Hobbs, Research Assistant - responded to the research requested by the Task Force regarding accountability measures already in use in Utah's school districts. Heather reviewed the comparison contents of the "District Report Cards" to state law requirements. Each district was portrayed as to their compliance with the law. Dr. Lawrence noted that the districts are being contacted if they are noncompliant. Heather distributed results of the survey that gathered information regarding existing accountability systems in the state's school districts.

Mr. Howe noted the publication that lists end of level scores for each school and district 1997-98 school year. He reviewed the CRT tests that were administered in 1997-98 school year. He reviewed the elementary math CRT scores by district and also by school and noted the differences in scores.

Dr. Lawrence noted that the Stanford Achievement Test(SAT) test tells how students compare at a broad level with students in the same grade at the same level. She stated that CRT's are specifically designed to tell what a student knows or does not know on the core curriculum, regardless of how others perform.

Sen. Stephenson noted that the National Assessment of Educational Progress(NAEP) and SAT tests are continued because the public wants to know how students in Utah compare to students in other states in the nation. He also noted that there are tests similar to the NAEP, but that are particular to the Utah Core Curriculum.

Dr. Lawrence was asked to begin the process to establish a performance standard with the Language Arts Test . Sen. Hale volunteered to be a member of the Standards Setting Group.

6. Other Business –

Rep. Rowan stated that the PTA will be on the August 16th agenda, that Provo School District would be invited to share their district's standards and accountability program, that staff will prepare a list of issues that need to be addressed by the task force, and that a general direction will be presented at the September 7-8 conference.

Rep. Rowan adjourned the meeting at 12:52 p.m.